

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Matt Fulton, City Manager
FROM: Sherrie Le, Assistant City Mgr.
DATE: February 8, 2016
SUBJECT: Personnel Policy – Update Travel Policy



City of West St. Paul

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Staff has been working for a long time to update the entire Personnel Policy Manual. This is one of a series of updated policies that will come before the City Council for their approval. We found that approval of travel time, meals and mileage reimbursement was not consistent across departments. This policy attempts to clarify the rules to ensure that consistency. This policy was recently shared with the Labor-Management Committee to seek their thoughts and suggestions. No changes were recommended.

From time to time employees are asked to attend conferences, seminars or to attend meetings away from their normal workplace. This policy is intended to clarify:

1. when travel time is compensable;
2. when and how much mileage reimbursement will be paid and under what circumstances, and;
3. how meals will be reimbursed and under what circumstances.

It is important to have a clear and specific policy covering these areas, so employees are treated equitably across all departments. This policy is consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act & IRS Requirements. Full policy attached.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. Current policy is comparable. A few things that have been reimbursed in the past will not be reimbursed but overall the effect is neutral.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff requests approval of the revised Travel Policy as part of the City of West St. Paul Personnel Policies.

Travel Policy

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1. When travel time is compensable;
2. When and how much mileage reimbursement will be paid and under what circumstances, and;
3. Under what circumstances and how meals will be reimbursed.

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TRAVEL TIME & MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Travel time and mileage to and from work is not compensable. This time is referred to as commute time. When an employee has a full day activity (meeting, training, etc.) that they are assigned to perform at a location other than their primary work location, they may be eligible to be compensated for part or all of the time and/or mileage it takes to travel and from the secondary location as described below.

Use of City Vehicle - If an employee comes to work and uses a City vehicle to go to the secondary location, they will be compensated for the time from work to the secondary location and back to work after they are finished at the secondary location. Use of City vehicles in individual situations must be approved by the supervisor prior to using the City vehicle.

Full Day/Shift at a Secondary Location

Shorter distance - If an employee is traveling to another location for the full shift, and it is a shorter distance to go directly to the secondary location from home versus coming to work first, they should normally go directly to the location. Since the time is actually shorter than their normal commute to and from work, the time is not compensable. Mileage, since it is a shorter distance than the normal commute is not eligible for reimbursement.

Longer Distance - If, in the same scenario, the distance is longer to the secondary location, the employees will be paid for the difference in the time it takes to get to the secondary location and back home. The employee will be reimbursed for mileage at the City approved rate for any excess miles the employee is required to drive their vehicle due to travel to the secondary location.

Partial Day/Shift at a Secondary Location – Shorter Distance

Beginning of Shift - If the meeting or training starts at the beginning of the shift and the distance from home to the secondary location is less than the normal distance and commute time to work, the employee should normally go directly to the secondary location. Because it takes less time and is a shorter distance than their normal commute, the time and mileage will not be compensated.

After the meeting/training is over, travel to work during their shift is compensable time and the miles driven back to work are eligible for mileage reimbursement.

End of Shift - The reverse is true if the meeting ends at the end of the shift. The drive time to the location occurs during regular work hours and is therefore compensable as is mileage to the meeting. The drive time home is not compensable and the mileage home is not reimbursable because it is closer to home than the normal commute from work to home.

Mid-Shift – If the meeting/training begins sometime after the beginning of the shift and ends before the end of the shift, all travel time to and from the secondary location is compensable and mileage reimbursable.

Partial Day/Shift at a Secondary Location – Longer Distance

Beginning of Shift - If the meeting or training starts at the beginning of the shift and the distance from home to the secondary location is more than the normal distance to work, the employee can go directly to the secondary location. The difference in time will be compensated, and the difference in mileage will be reimbursed, as it is more time and more miles than their normal commute. After the meeting/training is over, travel back to work is compensable time and mileage will be reimbursed.

End of Shift - The reverse is true if the meeting ends at the end of the shift. The drive time to the meeting occurs during regular work hours and is compensable and the miles will be reimbursed. The drive time home is partially compensable because it is further than the normal drive home from work. The difference in time is compensable and the difference in mileage (excess only) is reimbursable.

Mid-Shift – If the meeting/training begins sometime after the beginning of the shift and ends before the end of the shift, all travel time to and from the secondary location is compensable and mileage reimbursable.

MEAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR CONFERENCES AND TRAINING

Within the 7-County Metro Area - Meals during work-related activities while at a secondary location within the 7-County metro area are not eligible for reimbursement, as employees would have to eat anyway and have the option to bring their own lunch.

Outside the 7-County Metro Area - Employees are eligible for reimbursement for out of pocket expenses for meals that occur during a work-related event outside the 7-county metro area. The amount of reimbursement depends on the location. If overnight travel is not required, normally only a mid-shift meal is reimbursed. However, if travel time extends past a second meal time, that meal may be reimbursed. Employees are eligible only for times when meals are not provided as part of the event (seminar, conference, etc.). See per diem reimbursement below.

Overnight Lodging Required - If the seminar or conference is far enough away for overnight lodging, employees are eligible for reimbursement for meals not provided as part of the event. Of those, breakfast, lunch and/or dinner are eligible for a per diem amount in accordance with the chart in the link below. (Amount varies by location). Employees may not use a City credit card for any meals where per diem reimbursement applies. Per diem amounts are only for those meals in a day that are not provided.

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>